

# Councilman Paul Cunningham's Ward 2 Newsletter

M A R C H 6 , 2 0 1 3

## UPCOMING DATES:

- March 17: St Patrick's day. See page 3 for parade information
- March 23: Little League opening day (page 4)

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## PAUL'S NOTE

It's getting to be March, and we are arriving in the proverbial briar patch. It's budget time.

We are facing a \$15 million general fund budget gap. That's according to the report that my colleagues and I were given on Tuesday afternoon. Better than what we would be facing had we not taken the measures we have been taking over the last couple of years, but, obviously, not good. The gap has materialized due to increased pension obligations, not over spending.

There are ways to easily erase a big part of that gap. For example, we could restructure our \$10.5 million in debt obligations. It's a simple sounding solution, but it could cause us other headaches. It would damage our credit rating, and could increase our long term debt obligation. I am not willing to push off our budget woes on future councils. It is politically easy to kick the can down the road, but I think we were elected to make the hard decisions. Earlier this year on the John C. Scott Show, I stated I was committed to our long term financial sustainability.

I had a long and productive talk with the head of the city's human resources department, Lani Simmons. One cost that is going up for our employees is, and this will come as a surprise to no one, health care. Current estimates are that our health care costs for employees are going up by \$3.7 million. The city's human resources department recently negotiated a deal with Cigna for coverage of our employees. The deal between Cigna and

the city is an unquestionably an improvement, and the city has built in a way to get out of the contract should costs spiral out of control. I still have reservations, but congratulations to the human resources team for working this out.

Keep in mind that benefits like health care and pensions were negotiated with employees with the understanding that the employees were willing to forgo pay increases. We need to remember this when considering cutting back on benefit packages. This is especially true of our police and firefighters, who risk their lives every day. People are too quick to say that the public safety pensions are to blame for the budget gap. I reject that argument, as all cities and the state of Arizona participate in the same public safety retirement system.

Before we go after the pensions and benefits of newer and lower paid employees, we need to look at the group that I call the "five per-centers." I do not believe any one person is responsible, I just think a series of decisions have been made by various bureaucrats over that years that completely and unfairly benefit specific number of City employees.



## PAUL'S NOTE (CONTINUED)

Essentially, employees making more than \$75,000 a year and with more than 7 years of service have a sweet deal. I am not blaming those individuals who fall into this category for obtaining the deal; many of them had nothing to do with the decisions that benefited them. That being said, they have no recourse to complain about the deal they have with the City. They have a nonadjustable retirement contribution of 5% to their pension, (something that is unavailable in private sector) and they pay as little as 2% out of pocket for health insurance. Meanwhile a person hired in the same job making \$50,000 with 6 years of service has an employee contribution for their retirement of 13.9% and they pay as much as 11% of their health care.

We still have to crunch the numbers to see how much can be saved by a more equitable arrangement, but it is unconscionable to ask lower paid employees to sacrifice more. I will continue to work until the system is fair for everyone.

We also talked about the Modern Streetcar. The new consultant the city hired is saying that the operation and maintenance will be \$4.4 million. That's right, a *new consultant*. I want to know how much we paid the consultant and why our operator isn't the same as the bus operator. The transit system needs to be operated holistically and be balanced in how it provides reliable and timely transportation to folks who cannot afford a car and to elective riders who utilize transit because they believe the system is better than a

car. Philosophically we have lost sight of this balance and need to come to a better solution. TIA, the VA, South Tucson, Pima Community College, local charter high schools, the university and TUSD are all potential partners for the transit system. Hopefully we can work with them to find ways to make transit more attractive.

A number of people came out to discuss their disappointment about supporting Davis-Monthan. I urge everyone to read the resolution that we passed. Review it and understand that 99% of all actions taken by the city have "an emergency clause." This resolution was to recognize the partnership it has with the City. It was not an endorsement of the F-35, nor was it an invitation to invite supersonic jets to take off from DM. I firmly believe the resolution was to recognize a longstanding partnership and insure it is reasonably sustained.

## DISPOSE-A-MED

The Pima County Sheriff's Department will be hosting Dispose-A-Med events intermittently throughout the year. These events are offered free of charge thanks to a grant provided by the Department of Justice.

Tablets, capsules, liquids, and creams will be collected. Metal or glass inhalation aerosol bottles, syringes, and epi-pens will not be accepted. For safety and confidentiality reasons, any items turned over for collection cannot be returned. We do not accept drugs from commercial organizations. For information about the disposal of needles and syringes, please visit the Pima County Health Department ( <http://www.pimahealth.org/news/needle.asp> ) website.

Our total collected weight for 2012 was 1553 pounds! 2012 was a very successful year and we wish to thank all those who participated in getting these unused or expired drugs off the street.

- April 27, 2013, 10am - 2pm, 4040 N. Oracle Road, (in front of Target)
- May 4, 2013, 8am - 12pm, 7575 E. Speedway Blvd., (down Prudence past fire station)

*Note: Do not bring medicines or other medical waste to either location until the date.*

## UDALL PARK

The Carol West Senior Addition will host a St. Patrick's Day Luncheon on Thursday, March 14 at 1 p.m. The cost is \$5.00 per person and the event will include delicious Irish food and music. Call 791-4121 to sign up.

AARP will be offering tax assistance at Udall Center on Mondays and Wednesdays, thru February 4-April 15 from 9 a.m. -1 p.m. First come, first serve basis. Contact 571-9884 for more information.

## ARIZONA BASEBALL

U of A vs Oregon State  
Friday, March 15 at 6 p.m.  
Saturday, March 16 at 6 p.m.  
Sunday, March 17 at noon

U of A vs Utah  
Friday, March 29 at 6 p.m.  
Saturday, March 30 at noon

To purchase tickets, call 621-CATS or visit [www.arizonawildcats.com](http://www.arizonawildcats.com)



## LEISURE CLASSES

The 2nd session of Leisure Classes will begin on March 17th. The Tucson Parks and Recreation Department offers a wide variety of fun and interesting programs. Visit [www.ezeereg.com](http://www.ezeereg.com) to view the Program Guide and Class Catalog. Contact Registration Services at 791-4877 for any questions and availability information.

## FRIENDS OF FT LOWELL

Friends of Fort Lowell Park is embarking on fund raising for beautifying and securing the Wildlife Oasis at the pond in the park. The goal is to overlay the existing chain link fence with ocotillo fencing which is beautifully natural, adding to the nice scenery and the security of the wildlife refuge created along the pond's edge.



This fencing will cost approximately \$2500. Funds raised to date: \$150. Please help us to further beautify and secure the Wildlife Oasis by sending your donations for the ocotillo fencing to Friends of Fort Lowell Park at P.O. Box 31474, Tucson, AZ 85751. Your donation of any amount is great appreciated. The Friends of Fort Lowell Park is an all volunteer non-profit (501c3) organization, so any contribution is tax deductible.

## ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Tucson's annual St. Patrick's Day Festival opens at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 17 at El Presidio Park Plaza, 160 W. Alameda Street, with live Irish music, dancers, entertainment, a children's game area, and food and merchandise vendors. Irish organizations, ethnic and cultural tables will be set up in the park as well. The one hour Parade will begin at 11:00 A.M. at Pennington & Stone Avenue. The Downtown Tucson Partnership has [the details](#).



## AARP TAX PREPARATION HELP

The AARP will be available to help out with tax preparation at several Eastside locations. Walk-ins are welcome at all three locations.

Udall Recreation Center, 7200 E Tanque Verde  
520-791-4931  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am – 1 pm (except Feb. 18)

Murphy-Wilmot Library, 530 N Wilmot Rd  
Mondays and Thursdays, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 9252 E 22<sup>nd</sup> St  
Wednesdays, 12 pm – 4 pm

## FRED ENKE TOWN HALL

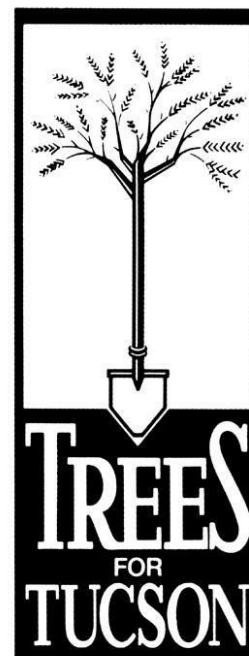
The City of Tucson invites the public to participate in a discussion of the future of Fred Enke Golf Course. Staff will provide a brief budget overview and history. The primary goal of this meeting is to invite the public to give feedback as to what they would like to see in terms of outdoor recreation activity for the future of Fred Enke Golf Course. Follow up meetings will be scheduled.

The meeting will feature Council Member Shirley Scott and Tucson Parks and Recreation Director Fred Gray and will take place Wednesday, March 13, 2013 at 6 pm at the William Clements Recreation Center, 8155 E. Poinciana Dr.

## TREES FOR TUCSON

Trees for Tucson is kicking off its spring planting season! Visit [www.treesfortucson.org](http://www.treesfortucson.org) or call (520) 791-3109 for questions and to obtain an application for low-cost desert adapted shade trees for your home or community project!

The Tucson Botanical Gardens, in cooperation with Trees for Tucson & City of Tucson are presenting a new Certificate in Urban Forestry Program (9-week course, from February 26-April 23, 2013). This course is \$220 for nonmembers, \$195 discounted rate for TCB or TBG members! Sign up today, more information can be found at their website.



## CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND COM- PENSATION

The 2013 City of Tucson's Citizens' Commission on Public Service and Compensation held its first meeting on January 17 with all seven commissioners attending. The commission completed its agenda and elected its officers. The Commission voted to hold its meetings on Wednesday evenings at 5:30 p.m. Public involvement with the Commission is encouraged and welcomed by either sending emails to the Commission at [cityclerk@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:cityclerk@tucsonaz.gov) and/or attending subsequent Commission meetings, which are held in the Mayor and Council Conference Room, 255 W. Alameda Street..

This year's Commission will be holding weekly meetings through March 15, 2013. For more information, visit the City's website about

the Commission's proceedings and updates on the agenda and decisions at: <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/clerks/boards?board=76>

For more information or questions on ADA accommodations and accessibility for these meetings, call Yolanda Lozano, City Clerk's Office, at 791-4213.

## PROCUREMENT FAIR

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Pima County Procurement and City of Tucson Housing and Community Development are hosting a procurement fair at Kino Sports Complex, 2500 East Ajo Way, Friday, April 5 9am – 2pm.

This year's fair features over 175 representatives from Federal, State and local procurement agencies. It also features Construction Zone plus other businesses wishing to make new connections.

Various workshops will also be provided.

No cost to attend Nominal fee for booth holders. No fee for government or non-profit entities.

For more information contact Monica Dennis at 520-724-3807 or [monica.dennis@pima.gov](mailto:monica.dennis@pima.gov)

## S H R E D - A - T H O N

2013 will mark the 6th year the Pima County Sheriff's Department has provided this valuable service free-of-charge to the community. All confirmed event dates are on Saturdays, and all shredding events will run from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

- April 6 at Casas Church- 10801 N. La Canada Blvd.
- September 14 at Kino Sports Complex- 2500 E. Ajo Way
- November 16 at Empire High School- 10701 E. Maryann Cleveland Way

## K O M E N S O U T H E R N A R I Z O N A

One in eight women reading this will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.

These are your friends, your neighbors, your relatives, the people you brush up against at the grocery store or the car wash.

The mission of Komen Southern Arizona is to spread the word that early detection of breast cancer saves lives.

By taking part in the Race for the Cure on March 17, you'll be saving lives too. The money we raise on Race Day is turned into grants to diagnose, treat and educate women and men. And for every dollar raised, 75 cents net stays right here in our community.

So join us on March 17 for our Race for the Cure, for the first time on the UA campus.

This year's Race for the Cure will be extra special. It's the 15th anniversary race, and Olympic silver medalist and UA undergrad Brigetta Barrett heads up the event as Honorary Race

Chair. Brigetta's mother is a breast cancer survivor.

The 15th anniversary Southern Arizona Race for the Cure will take place on Sunday, March 17th, 2013 at the University of Arizona campus.

Register online at [www.komensaz.org](http://www.komensaz.org), or paper registration forms mailed by request. For more info call 520 319 0155.

## M A Y O R A N D C O U N C I L

The next Mayor and Council meeting will be on March 19. Regular Session starts at 5:30 pm following an afternoon study session. There is always a short call to the audience before the business portion of the meeting. Council chambers are located downtown at 255 W Alameda. The agendas for the meetings are posted online at <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/clerks/mcdocs>.



We're on the web!  
[Cms3.tucsonaz.gov/ward2](http://Cms3.tucsonaz.gov/ward2)

**M A R C H 6 , 2 0 1 3**

Ward 2  
7575 E. Speedway Blvd.  
Tucson AZ 85710  
Phone: 520-791-4687  
Fax: 520-791-5380  
Email: [ward2@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:ward2@tucsonaz.gov)

**Councilman Paul Cunningham's Ward 2  
Newsletter**

Please bring these items to the Ward  
2 Office for the following charities:  
THE COMMUNITY FOOD BANK—Non Perish-  
able Items  
DIAPER BANK OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA—  
Infant/Child/Adult Diapers  
SAAF—Personal Hygiene Products and Per-  
sonal Care Products  
TIHAN - Personal Care Items for Individuals  
and Families in Need  
ICU—Eye Glasses  
DANCING IN THE STREETS ARIZONA—  
Ballet/Dance Equipment